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House Rpt.108-674 - DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS BILL, 2005

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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Fiscal year 2005 recommendation	1 $729,029,000
Fiscal year 2004 appropriation	781,685,000
Fiscal year 2005 budget request	689,185,000
Comparison with fiscal year 2004 appropriation	-52,656,000
Comparison with fiscal year 2004 budget request	+39,844,000

The Science and Technology account funds all Environmental Protection Agency research (including, by transfer of funds, Hazardous Substances Superfund research activities) carried out through grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements with other Federal agencies, states, universities, and private business, as well as in-house research. This account also funds personnel compensation and benefits, travel, supplies and operating expenses for all Agency research. Research addresses a wide range of environmental and health concerns across all environmental media and encompasses both long-term basic and near-term applied research to provide the scientific knowledge and technologies necessary for preventing, regulating, and abating pollution, and to anticipate emerging environmental issues.

The Committee has recommended an appropriation of $729,029,000 for Science and Technology for fiscal year 2005, a decrease of $52,656,000 below last year's spending level, and an increase of $39,844,000 above the budget request.

The Committee's recommendation includes the following changes to the funding levels included in the budget submission:

Restoration Plus program to demonstrate, validate and report on critical ecological hubs and corridors within the Mid-Atlantic Highlands and approaches to Highlands ecological prioritization, restoration and conservation Research and educational tools are to be developed using integrative technologies to predict future environmental risks and support informed, proactive decision-making to be undertaken in conjunction with the Highlands Action Program;

45. $900,000 to the Polymer Alliance Zone's MARCEE Initiative with oversight provided by the Office of Solid Waste.

The Committee has recommended a general reduction of $3,938,000 in this account.

In addition to the funds provided through appropriations directly to this account, the Committee has recommended that $36,097,000 be transferred to `Science and Technology' from the `Hazardous Substance Superfund' account for ongoing research activities consistent with the intent of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, as amended.

The Committee is fully supportive of the collaborative partnership of the EPA and the National Institutes of Health in their system of Centers for Children's Environmental Health and Disease Prevention Research.

The Committee recognizes the EPA's commitment to developing a Computational Toxicology program to reduce the cost and use of animal testing, and has funded this activity at the requested level. This program was fully funded and the Committee encourages EPA to consider validation of existing non-animal and alternative chemical screening and prioritization methods that might not typically be considered `computational toxicology' methods. The Committee continues to await EPA's report regarding expenditures for fiscal year 2004 funds for research, development and validation of non-animal and other alternative methods by the Office of Research and Development.

The Committee directs that the EPA continue its technology transfer activities initially funded by this Committee in fiscal year 2000 at not less than the current level of support and that those activities be carried out through the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation.

In 2001 EPA requested that NAS review the situation regarding use of human studies in EPA regulatory programs. Congress has also expressed a concern in this area. The NAS Committee published its findings and recommendations in February 2004. The Committee urges EPA to consider these conclusions in developing policy and regulation to govern use of human studies in its regulatory programs and responsibilities.

The Committee has also included funding to continue the endocrine disruptor research program at the fiscal year 2004 level of $10,887,000.

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House Rpt.108-636 - DEPARTMENTS OF LABOR, HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, AND EDUCATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATION BILL, 2005

Full Display		Related Information	
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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SCIENCES

The Committee provides $650,027,000 for the National Institute of Environmental Health Science (NIEHS), which is $17,635,000 above the fiscal year 2004 comparable level and the same as the budget request.

Mission.--The NIEHS mission is to reduce the burden of environmentally related illness and dysfunction by understanding how environmental exposures affect health, how individuals differ in their susceptibility to these effects, and how these susceptibilities change over time. This mission is achieved through multidisciplinary biomedical research programs, prevention and intervention efforts, and communication strategies that encompass training, education, technology transfer, and community outreach.

Environmental exposures and lung disease.--The Committee is pleased to note NIEHS's support of studies that establish epidemiological links between environmental exposures and the development of lung disease like asthma and COPD. The Committee encourages the Institute to enhance its research into how environmental stimuli interact with the lung to produce lung disease, with emphasis on cellular responses to inhaled pollutants and the subsequent cell signaling steps that lead to disease.

Juvenile diabetes.--The Committee commends NIEHS efforts on the Environmental Genome Project (EGP), which seeks to understand how individuals differ in their susceptibility to environmental agents and how these susceptibilities change over time. This project may help to identify environmental triggers for diseases such as Type 1 diabetes. The Committee encourages enhanced efforts to interact and coordinate EGP with efforts like NIDDK's Environmental Determinants of Diabetes in the Young (TEDDY) Study, to investigate genetic and gene-environment interactions in the development of prediabetic autoimmunity and Type 1 diabetes.

Mercury.--In order to properly research gaps in the area of mercury exposure and brain chemistry, and given recent hearings on mercury exposure and relationships between autism and Alzheimer's disease and mercury exposure, NIEHS is encouraged to pursue studies of how inorganic mercury and organic mercury compounds (including ethyl, methyl, and other forms of mercury from all sources) are processed in the bodies of children and adults. NIEHS is also encouraged to support studies of the toxic effects of inorganic mercury and organic mercury compounds on the nervous systems of young children,

adults, and the elderly and methods of properly removing mercury and mercury-containing compounds from the brains of affected humans.

Toxic exposure and brain development.--Notwithstanding the Institute of Medicine May 2004 report on autism, the Committee believes it is important to develop a more complete understanding of the impact that toxic exposures may have on brain development. There is a convergence of findings from tissue culture studies, animal models, and clinical studies of immune dysfunction in children with autism that suggests a biological link between genetic sensitivity and damage to developing brains from certain toxins. It is important that NIH continue this research to better understand the impact that exposures to mercury (including thimerosal) and other toxins have on brain development. A more complete understanding of the impact of these exposures through research, including animal models, will help to develop more effective interventions.

National Toxicology Program.--In order for the Interagency Coordinating Committee for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ICCVAM) to carry out its responsibilities under the ICCVAM Authorization Act, the Committee encourages NIEHS to strengthen the resources provided for ICCVAM activities in order to ensure that new and alternative test methods used or recommended for federal regulatory agencies, and those under consideration or planned for use within the National Toxicology Program's toxicity testing project, are validated prior to their use.

Parkinson's disease.--The Committee encourages NIEHS in collaboration with NINDS to gain a greater understanding of the environmental underpinnings of Parkinson's disease. The Committee also encourages NIEHS to intensify its efforts in the Collaborative Centers for Parkinson's Disease Research Program. This initiative facilitates significant collaboration between genetics, clinical medicine, epidemiology, and basic science so that the most promising leads may be investigated more quickly in pursuit of a cure or to reduce the incidence of harmful toxins.

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